

REMARKS

This is in response to the Final Office Action mailed September 8, 2003, in which claims 1-20 were rejected. The application has been amended to designate it as a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent No. 6,198,424 (Diede et al.). Additionally, amendments have been made to claims 1-10, 12 and 13, and new claims 21-23 have been added. Entry of the Amendment and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

In Section 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Diede et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,198,424). As stated above, Applicant has amended the present application to claim priority to the cited reference and remove it as prior art with regard to the enabling disclosure identified by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

In Section 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by International Publication No. WO 00/43806 (Diede). Applicant respectfully believes that the cited reference is removed as prior art to the present application, which has a priority date of January 21, 1999. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

In Section 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-13 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over International Publication No. WO 00/43806 (Diede) in view of McEwan (U.S. Patent No. 5,609,059). As discussed above, Applicant submits that Diede is removed as prior art to the present application. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the rejections can be withdrawn.

In Section 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 3, 6, 9, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being

unpatentable over Diede in view of McEwan, and further in view of Mowrey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,500,649). Applicant believes that the rejections can be withdrawn since Diede is removed as prior art to the present application.

In view of the above comments and remarks, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Consideration and favorable action is respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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